



news from the

# Department of Community and Human Services

alexandria community services board



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## Bellefonte Wizards Take DCHS, Again

Virginia Special Olympics winners, the Bellefonte Wizards, played an exhibition game against the DCHS Shooting Stars, a team of staff from the Department of Community and Human Services, coached by Director Michael Gilmore. In a hard-charging repeat of last year's game, the Wizards again defeated the Shooting Stars by two points in double-overtime by a score of 27 to 25.

The Wizards finished their first season undefeated in the region, and through regular practice and hard work, last year won second place in the Senior Division of the Virginia Special Olympics. The Bellefonte Wizards live in City of Alexandria residential programs that assist adults with intellectual disabilities to develop community relationships and connections. This game kicked off the Bellefonte Wizard's third basketball season as they again strive to win in the Special Olympics.



*Wizards player Big D (left), Shooting Stars player and residential counselor Chrissy Lawrence (right) with referee and Director of Intellectual Disability Services Phil Caldwell.*



*DCHS Director Michael Gilmore (back right center) with Bellefonte Wizards players and coach (back left center).*

## Reporting Child Abuse

During fiscal year 2011, DCHS Child Protective Services (CPS) completed 548 family investigations and assessments. Always report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Call City of Alexandria CPS at 703.746.5800 24 hours a day, or the Virginia hotline at 1.800.552.7096. For immediate danger, call 911.

Complainants need only have reason to believe that abuse may be occurring. Any person making a complaint is immune from liability unless acting with malicious intent. CPS Program Manager Jennifer Cann said, "Reporting even trivial concerns is helpful, particularly in cases where a child is already known to our agency. This information is helpful in determining ongoing safety of a child."

Complainants may report anonymously; however, anonymity cannot be guaranteed if the case goes to court, and anonymity may limit CPS's ability to gather information from the reporter. When the complainant does provide a name, CPS makes every effort to protect the person's identity. Some individuals, due to their profession, are mandated to report suspected abuse. All callers are asked to provide as much information as possible about the concern and the child's identity. CPS investigates, and if there are risks to a child, an action plan is recommended, which is reviewed by the court.

The safety of children is a community responsibility. Noticing and reporting abuse will help to ensure a child's well-being and may save the child's life. To learn more about the warning signs of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect, visit [alexandriava.gov/ChildAbuse](http://alexandriava.gov/ChildAbuse).



Check out our annual report on the new Department of Community & Human Services website at [alexandriava.gov/dchs](http://alexandriava.gov/dchs)

## Annual Walk to Fight Breast Cancer

Late last fall, 1,000 people came out to participate in Alexandria's 18th Annual Walk to Fight Breast Cancer. Over \$110,000 was raised to support the Alexandria Breast Cancer Walk Fund, which has helped over 5,000 uninsured Alexandria women receive free mammograms and other diagnostic screenings since its inception in 1994. The Walk is sponsored by the City of Alexandria and the Inova Alexandria Hospital Foundation, and coordinated



with DCHS staff. Further information, including future volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, is available at [alexancerwalk.com](http://alexancerwalk.com) or by calling 703.746.3123.

**Left: Walkers warm up. Right: Jack Taylor (right center) presents a \$20,800 check to DCHS Chief Officer Lisa Baker (left center). Alexandria Toyota/Scion gave \$100 for every car sold and \$10 for every "Like" on their Facebook page during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.**



## Increased Efficiency in Subsidized Child-Care Processes

Child-care social workers will now be able to provide more in-depth services now that the Virginia Department of Social Services has implemented a statewide automated system for subsidized child-care to replace the various automated and manual systems previously used.

To fully appreciate the transformation that the Virginia Case Management System (VaCMS) and the Electronic Child Care (ECC) systems have created, it helps to understand the previous process. Enrolling children in subsidized child-care is a multi-step and labor-intensive activity that requires the social worker to establish eligibility, authorize care, enter data into the local payment system, create invoices for providers and review those invoices for accuracy when submitted for payment.

With the new system, although the eligibility interview process and documentation requirements are much the same, and the data still must be entered into the system, now it is the computer that calculates the income and other variables to determine financial eligibility and copay for child-care. Swipe cards are sent to parents to be used each time the child is dropped off or picked up. Using that electronic data, the system twice a month calculates the amount owed the vendor and makes a direct deposit for the sum into the vendor's bank account

or credits the amount to a debit card issued to vendors who do not have an account.

While the shift to automation has been intimidating, everyone impacted is confident that it will improve the workflow and the cash flow and ultimately benefit all. Social workers plan to be able to focus more on parent education and placement visits to help ensure stable, developmentally appropriate child-care placements. With the streamlining of business processes, there is the hope that there will be more child-care funding available to serve families on the wait list.



**Project staff at the kick-off for the automated child-care and case management systems.**

## Opioid Treatment Program Receives Accreditation for Fourth Time

The Alexandria Opioid Treatment Program received its fourth three-year CARF accreditation. The program helps adults stop using narcotics by prescribing and monitoring methadone, a medication that does not produce a "high" and minimizes the discomfort of withdrawal. Clients participate in counseling and abstain from illegal drugs and alcohol while in the program.

CARF is an international, independent accrediting body of health and human services. Accreditation demonstrates the program's commitment to continuous improvement of service quality and focus on the satisfaction of the persons served.

CARF surveyors praised the numerous strengths of the program and stated, "Enthusiastic staff are committed to providing excellent addiction treatment in an atmosphere that is welcoming and respectful. Persons served say this is the best program they have attended, ...and they feel their methadone treatment is accepted without stigma." No areas of nonconformance were identified, an accomplishment achieved by only 3% of CARF surveys.

This distinction came on the heels of another honor. The Alexandria Opioid Treatment Program was one of only five such programs out of the 1,300 nationwide to be featured in a SAMHSA video informing providers and clients how most effectively to use methadone.



For more information or to view a copy of the video, contact Susan Tatum, MH Team Supervisor, Substance Abuse Outpatient Program at 703.746.3648 or [susan.tatum@alexandriava.gov](mailto:susan.tatum@alexandriava.gov).

Correction: The last newsletter featured an article about the Barriers to Access Removal Team and their efforts to facilitate access to services for homeless individuals. The article incorrectly stated that Medicaid and Medicare require clients to annually update their Monthly Amount to Pay (MAP). Annual MAP updates are required of all CSB clients, regardless of the type of insurance carried. Eligibility for Medicaid, Medicare or other insurance is not related to up-to-date MAPs.

## Peacock Group Home Open House

Over the holidays, the Peacock House opened its doors to the community by holding an open house. The residents of the group home were able to meet neighbors and DCHS staff members and share their holiday spirit. Brenda Harris-Strom, senior counselor and supervisor of Peacock House, said, "We felt it would be a great way to meet the community and for the residents to meet many of the staff that support them." Santa, in the person of residential counselor Cathy McDonald, welcomed guests at the door. They was a spread of food in addition to a cobbler that the residents baked.

Peacock group home is one of nine operated by Residential Services. Group home programs provide housing and 24-hour training, support and supervision to persons with disabilities, including those living with intellectual disabilities, mental illness and people in recovery from substance dependency.

In addition to group homes, Residential Services operates a Supervised Apartment Program and Supported Living Program in which residents receive drop-in assistance from staff. These programs support approximately 185 Alexandrians each year, allowing them to live in their community.



***DCHS Director Michael Gilmore (back) with Senior Residential Counselor Brenda Harris-Strom (center), residential counselor Cathy McDonald as Santa, and three residents of the Peacock house.***



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## Older Alexandrians Surveyed on Quality of Life

Older Alexandrians, both those over age 65 and baby boomers (age 50-64), reported a good quality of life and an optimistic outlook for the future in a recent Age Ready Indicators Benchmark Survey. Overall, Alexandria respondents rated their quality of life, health, and preparation for retirement slightly higher than their counterparts in the statewide survey. Safe neighborhoods, walkable spaces, easy access to multiple forms of transportation and close proximity to cultural attractions were some of the features of life in the City that got high marks from residents polled.

The survey of 5,000 Virginians was developed and administered to gauge the perspectives and expectations of older Virginians as the state and its localities prepare for the “age wave,” a doubling of the senior population. “The results of this survey suggest that Boomers will bring different perspectives and

expectations to their senior years and will likely redefine what it means to grow older in Virginia,” said R. David Ross, Executive Director of the Older Dominion Partnership, the group that did the survey. “We plan to conduct this survey every three years to follow the transition of Boomers into their senior years and help work to ensure Virginia remains the best place to live, work, and play at any age.”

The survey included interviews in each of the Commonwealth’s 25 Area Agencies on Aging, which work with the Virginia Department for the Aging to provide services for older Virginians and their families. To read the survey report, go to [www.olderdominion.org](http://www.olderdominion.org). For more information on Alexandria’s current services for older adults and plans to accommodate the needs of the aging population, go to [www.alexandriava.gov/aging](http://www.alexandriava.gov/aging).

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*Access the City of Alexandria’s pages on Twitter and Facebook. Connect today at [alexandriava.gov/Twitter](https://twitter.com/alexandriava) and [alexandriava.gov/Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/alexandriava) to receive up-to-the minute information about City news, events, initiatives and more.*

The Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services is comprised of programs from three formerly separate departments: The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse; Human Services and the Office on Women. While the Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) will continue oversight of mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse programs, the CSB newsletter now features programs from across the Department.